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O 241446Z MAY 07
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7650
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

UNCLAS JERUSALEM 000964

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA, NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/WATERS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [ASEC](#)

SUBJECT: GAZA TENSE BUT QUIETER AS IDF SHIFTS OPERATIONS TO
WEST BANK HAMAS ARRESTS

REF: JERUSALEM 955 AND PREVIOUS

1. (SBU) Summary. There was sporadic factional and clan violence in Gaza late May 22 to mid-day (local) May 24. Hamas and Fatah both submitted lists of the other's ceasefire violations to the Follow-up Committee. President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) visited Gaza and met with PM Ismayil Haniyah May 23. 13 Qassam rockets struck Israel from 1400 (local) May 22 to 1300 May 24 causing substantial damages to a vehicle and agricultural facilities, but no injuries. Palestinian media and security contacts report the IDF shot and killed a Palestinian farmer in Bayt Lahiya May 24, and IAF airstrikes injured 8 Palestinians. Arabic-language press/television report the arrest of 33 Hamas officials in the West Bank early May 24, including PA Education Minister Nasser al-Din al-Sha'ar, 3 Hamas PLC members and several Hamas Mayors including those of Nablus and Qalqiliya. End summary.

Scattered Violence as Abbas Visits Gaza

2. (SBU) There was sporadic factional and clan violence in Gaza late May 22 to 1500 local. On May 24, Hamas and Fatah both submitted lists of the other faction's ceasefire violations to the Follow-up Committee (formed May 19 under Egyptian auspices and with participation of Egyptian General Intelligence Service MG Burhan Hamad). Late May 23, unknown gunmen shot and injured two PSO guards near Fatah spokesman/al-Aqsa Brigades leader Maher Miqdad's home (Muqawsi tower) in Gaza City. Late May 22, security forces reported finding and defusing a bomb in front of retired Bahriya (Coastal Patrol) commander Juma'a Ghali's home in Gaza City. Fatah and Hamas traded accusations of sporadic shootings, establishment of illegal checkpoints, and restationing of gunmen on rooftops.

3. (SBU) President Abbas visited Gaza and met with PM Ismayil Haniyah May 23. They reportedly discussed the Hamas-Fatah ceasefire and a possible ceasefire with Israel.

Qassams and Israeli Strikes Continue

4. (SBU) 13 Qassam rockets struck Israel from 1400 (local) May 22 to 1500 May 24 causing substantial property damage to a vehicle and agricultural facilities, but no injuries. Rockets hit Sderot, Kissufim and south of Ashkelon. Hamas claimed 18 rocket and five mortar launches during this period. Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and the PRCs also claimed launches.

5. (SBU) Palestinian media and security contacts report that IDF fire killed a Palestinian man in Bayt Lahiya on May 24.

Late May 23, IAF airstrikes injured 8 Palestinians (3 seriously) in strikes on a warehouse, brick factory, money exchange shops, an "Executive Force" position and vehicles. A Palestinian woman died May 24 of injuries previously sustained in an IAF airstrike.

IDF Arrests 33 West Bank Hamas Figures

16. (SBU) Arabic-language press/television report that the IDF arrested 33 Hamas officials in the West Bank early May 24, including PA Education Minister Nasser al-Din al-Sha'ar, 3 Hamas PLC members, several Hamas Mayors including those of Nablus and Qalqiliya, and the heads of northern West Bank Islamic charities. Palestinian security contacts say the IDF confiscated computers, documents and office equipment at most arrest locations. Palestinian security contacts say arrest operations continued in the West Bank throughout recent Israeli operations in Gaza, but the May 24 arrests are the first targeting of the West Bank Hamas leadership since the current round of fighting erupted in Gaza.

WALLES